IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A ~~Method~~ method for recognizing speech, comprising:

receiving an input speech signal,

preprocessing said input speech signal in order to thereby generate a preprocessed speech signal,

performing speech recognition with respect to said preprocessed speech signal in order to generate a recognition result, and

outputting said recognition result,

wherein in [[a]] said preprocessing ~~section (S2),~~ a step of performing a variance normalization ~~(VN)~~ is applicable to ~~a given or~~ the received speech signal ~~(S),~~ ~~and/or to a derivative (S') thereof,~~ said preprocessing ~~section comprising the steps of~~ includes:

performing a statistical analysis ~~(S11)~~ of said speech signal ~~(S) and/or of a derivative (S') thereof~~, thereby generating ~~and/or~~ and providing statistical evaluation data ~~(ED)~~,

generating ~~and/or providing~~ a normalization degree data ~~(ND)~~ from said statistical evaluation data ~~(ED)~~, and

performing [[a]] said variance normalization ~~(VN)~~ on said speech signal ~~(S),~~ ~~a derivative (S') and/or on a component thereof~~ in accordance with said normalization degree data ~~(ND)~~ – in particular with a normalization strength corresponding to said normalization degree data ~~(ND)~~ –, with normalization strength corresponding to said normalization degree data with normalization degree data having a value or values ~~in a neighbourhood of~~ being 0

with respect to a given threshold value indicating that no variance normalization ~~(VN)~~ has to be performed.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): The ~~Method~~ method according to Claim 1, wherein said statistical analysis ~~(S11)~~ is performed in an at least piecewise or partial frequency-dependent manner.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The ~~Method~~ method according to Claim 1, wherein said evaluation data ~~(ED)~~ and/or said normalization data ~~(ND)~~ are generated so as to reflect at least a piecewise frequency dependency.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The ~~Method~~ method according to Claim 1, wherein said statistical analysis ~~(S11)~~ includes a step of determining signal-to-noise ratio data ~~(SNR) or the like~~, in particular in a frequency-dependent manner.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The ~~Method~~ method according to Claim 1, wherein a set of discrete normalization degree values (Dj) is used as said normalization degree data ~~(ND)~~, in particular each ~~of which~~ discrete normalization degree value being assigned to a certain frequency interval (fj, Δfj), and said intervals (fj, Δfj) having essentially no overlap.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The ~~Method~~ method according to Claim 5, wherein each of said discrete normalization degree values ~~(~~Dj) has a value within the interval of 0 and 1.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The ~~Method~~ method according to Claim 1, wherein in each case, a normalization degree value (Dj) ~~in the neighbourhood of~~ being 0 indicates to skip any variance normalization ~~(VN)~~ for the respective assigned frequency interval (fj, Δfj).

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): The ~~Method~~ method according to Claim 1, wherein in each case, a normalization degree value (Dj) ~~in the neighbourhood of~~ being 1 ~~indicates~~ with respect to a given threshold value indicates to perform a maximum variance normalization ~~(VN)~~ for the respective assigned frequency interval (fj, Δfj).

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): The ~~Method~~ method according to Claim 1, wherein a transfer function between said statistical evaluation data ~~(ED)~~ and said normalization degree data ~~(ND)~~ is used for generating said normalization degree data ~~(ND)~~ from said statistical evaluation data ~~(ED)~~.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): The ~~Method~~ method according to Claim 9, wherein a piecewise continuous, continuous or continuous differentiable function ~~or the like~~ is used as said transfer function, so as to particularly achieve a smooth and/or differentiable transfer between said statistical evaluation data ~~(ED)~~ and said normalization degree data ~~(ND)~~.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): The ~~Method~~ method according to Claim 9, wherein a theta-function, or a sigmoidal function, ~~or the like~~ is employed as said transfer function.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): The ~~Method~~ method according to Claim 1, wherein said variance normalization ~~(S14)~~ is carried out by multiplying said speech signal ~~(S)~~, a derivative ~~(S')~~ and/or a component thereof with a reduction factor ~~(R)~~ being a function of said statistical evaluation data ~~(ED)~~, in particular of the signal noise, and the normalization degree data ~~(ND)~~, in particular of the normalization degree values (Dj) and/or in particular in a frequency-dependent manner.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): The ~~Method~~ method according to Claim 1, wherein a reduction factor ~~(R)~~ is used having the – in particular frequency-dependent – form

$$R = 1/(1 + (\sigma - 1) \cdot D)$$

with σ denoting the temporal standard deviation of the speech signal ~~(S)~~, its derivative ~~(S')~~, a component and/or a feature thereof and D denotes the normalization degree value in question.